

CLAIMS

(CLEAN VERSION)

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1. A method for providing discount incentives to potential customers for making purchases from service or goods providers; the method comprising the steps of:

    providing an internet website for providers to set their respective discount parameters for issuing discount coupons to potential customers;

    permitting access to said website by said potential customers to select providers from whom they wish to make purchases;

    establishing customer intended spending amount and period of time for a selected provider and indicating the corresponding discount parameters for the selected provider; and

    presenting a website display of a customer discount coupon corresponding to said discount parameters for printout by a customer for subsequent redemption at a provider's place of business.

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3. The method recited in claim 1 wherein said presenting step further comprises the steps of generating a map indicating the location of a selected provider and adding said map to said website display.

4. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of establishing a data file of coupon generation for each said provider.

5. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of including at least one verification number on each said discount coupon.

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A2) 6. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of displaying a search page at said website for permitting a potential customer to search for a provider based upon selected criteria.

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7. The method recited in claim 6 wherein said search criteria comprise at least one criterion taken from the group consisting of location, nature of products offered, nature of services offered and timing of provider registration at said website.

8. A method of issuing electronically-generated merchant-specific discount coupons to consumers over an internet communications link; the method comprising the steps of:

establishing an internet website on said link, said website having a selected address;

providing at least one website page for merchants to set their respective discount parameters for said discount coupons;

providing at least one website page for consumers to select one of said merchants;

providing at least one website page for consumers to indicate their desired spending amount;

determining the discount parameters of a selected merchant based upon the spending amount by a consumer;

presenting a website page having an electronic discount coupon representing the discount parameters for the selected merchant; and

permitting a consumer to print the presented page for subsequent redemption of said discount coupon at the selected merchant.

10. The method recited in claim 8 wherein said presenting step further comprises the steps of generating a map indicating the location of a selected merchant and adding said map to said website display.

11. The method recited in claim 8 further comprising the step of establishing a data file of coupon generation for each said merchant.

12. The method recited in claim 8 further comprising the step of including at least one verification number on each said discount coupon.

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13. The method recited in claim 8 further comprising the step of displaying a search page at said website for permitting a potential consumer to search for a merchant based upon selected criteria.

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